

There is a national burger fast food restaurant that used to give our paper crowns for kids. And these crowns had a game on them with some rules. Whoever wears the crown and first declares "one two three, I am the king" is the king. And they get to be in charge. So, often in high school with my friends we would go here and play this game and take it way too seriously. The catch was, whenever everyone else got sick of your tyrannical rule, they could call for a coup. And then a new king would be crowned. As you can imagine teenage boys, there were plenty of coups with everyone wanting to be the king and in charge.

There is something very human about the desire to be in charge. Even if it is a paper crown that is really only a marketing scheme. All of us want to be in charge of our lives. The question every day is who will we allow to be king?

Turn with me to 1 Samuel 8.

I. We want human kings instead of God (v. 1-9).

This is the trap that we fall into.

We aren't happy with how God is in charge of things.

We want to give him some advice and offer someone else to be in charge.

This is what Israel does this morning.

Their request if a king is ultimately about them, not wanting God.

Verse 1, **"When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel."**

This is the setting for us.

It is the current spiritual situation and political reality.

Samuel has been leading Israel for decades.

He began Israel as a very young man.

But now, like Eli, Samuel is getting old.

And Samuel makes his sons judges.

Samuel sons are to be the leaders of Israel in the future.

Verse 2, **"The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba."**

This gives us a little more information about them.

Gives us their names, which are good names.

It tells us where they're judges over Israel.

But the problem is in verse three, **"Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice."**

You see these are not good men.

They're not walking in Samuel's footsteps.

They are following in the footsteps of Eli and his sons.

I think it's good to see that even one of the best prophets in Israel's Day had some blind spots when it came to his children.

Just like Eli did.

And like we're gonna see in the future, David will.

So these men are not good judges.

They're using their position to get rich.

They are accepting bribes and they are perverting justice.

Verse four, **"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵ and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."**

We see even their verse five the elders have a reason to be upset.

They're complaint is a valid complaint.

There is injustice happening.

Things are not right.

There's a problem that's gotta be dealt with.

We would complain with them.

They rightly recognize these people should not lead us.

Someone else should.

The problem is with the solution they're asking for.

What is wrong is that they presume to tell God what his plan should be.

And there is some humor here.

They are upset that this form of hereditary government where the prophet sons then become their leaders isn't working.

So they decide instead we should have a king whose sons will be our next leaders. That will work!

It should be obvious to them that even if they have an unbelievably righteous prophet, his sons might not be righteous.

Why in the world would they think a king's sons would be righteous?

We face the same temptation.

We can see things that are going wrong in the world.

We can see people accepting bribes we can see justice being perverted.

And we can rightly complain and say this is not right something needs to change.

Where we can get in trouble is when we start rejecting God and we think we know better.

The people would've been right to come to Samuel and say your sons are wicked.

We don't think this pleases God we think something needs to change.

What do you think God wants us to do?

Instead, they are coming to demanding of God that he do what they want because they think it's best.

Because understandably they don't trust what God is doing right now.

And we can do the same thing.

We can be rightly upset with the sin we see in the world and then wrongly tell God what He had better do about it.

Or we can start creating our own solutions without asking God if we should

Verse 6, **"But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the Lord."**

Samuel was upset which we can understand.

There's probably some of this, the human being, confronted with his own failings as a father and as a judge.

But what I love about Samuel is what he does with his disappointment.

He immediately goes to God.

He does what Israel should've done.
He sought God for wisdom on how to handle it.

Verse 7, **"And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."**

And God responds and says do what they ask.
God will give them a king.
He tells Samuel, it isn't about you.
It actually isn't even about your failures with your sons.
It's not even about your son's failure.
Ultimately, this is them rejecting me as their king.

This is hard.
Because we will justify ourselves all day long.
We will defend and rationalize and explain why we act certain ways.
But God sees through every excuse.
He cuts to the heart of the issue.
And the heart of the issue is that the people of Israel do not like how God rules.
And much of the time neither do we.

Verse 8, **"According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you."**

So God reminds them that this is their pattern.
They continually have rejected God.
What they do in 1 Samuel 8 is not new, but it is what they have done over and over and over since Genesis 3.
From the very beginning when God put us in the garden, we start to complain.
We don't like how he leads, and we want things to be different.
Israel did this even after they got out of Egypt.

They immediately complained about Moses and wanted someone else to be in charge.

And when Moses tells him to go to the promised land, they don't like that either.

And the same thing is true for us. This is our regular pattern of life.

We continually want to reject God as king.

And instead, we want someone else to be in charge.

Or we want ourselves to be king.

And we don't learn our lesson and we keep doing this again and again.

Verse 9, **"Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."**

There is a strange mercy here.

Sometimes God will give us what we want.

Sometimes God will give us what we've been praying for and asking for.

But often when God does that, it is not a blessing. It is a curse.

We are like children, begging to touch the stove and begging and pleading, and God finally tells us go ahead. See what happens..

So the mercy of God and it is grace sometimes gives us what we ask for so that we can see it won't satisfy.

And Samuel is told to warn the people.

To tell them exactly what this actually will look like to again tell them don't reject God it won't go how you think.

II. Every other king will disappoint us (v. 10-18).

This is the warning God gives.

God warns us how our sin will disappoint us.

God warns us what happens when we reject him.

So this is what Samuel is about to do.

Samuel is going to get very specific about what having a human king is actually like.

They have their idea in their head that will be better than God's plan.

And so Samuel will warn them.

And the warning is very specific.

We might complain it's too specific.

God seems to repeat Himself.

But God is doing this on purpose to make it very clear.

This is exactly what will take place if you do this..

And he goes on to say all of the different ways that they are going to be disappointed.

It is not a possibility. It is a sureness.

Verse 10, **"So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him."**

He repeats all the words that God has.

All of the warnings that they need to hear.

He doesn't skip any or summarize.

Verse 11, **"He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots."**

He begins by telling them this is exactly what a king is going to do.

The first thing he will do is take your sons.

Right away, your sons are going to be enlisted in his military.

They will have to ride his horses, and they will have to run ahead of him.

They will have to carry his chariot and bear his person.

Verse 12, **"And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots."**

The king will create a whole hierarchical system.

You're gonna have even more bosses.

He's gonna have commanders and another commanders.

And other officers who will all be bossing you around.

People will have to reap his harvest.

People will have to plow the kings fields.

People will have to make swords and weapons not for themselves, but for the kings army.

And people will have to make a new chariot not for you to ride, but for the king to have in his garage.

Verse 13, **"He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers."**

He was on to say he will also take your daughter's.

They will have to make perfume and cook for the king and make his feasts.

They were after parade around the palace.

Most fathers wouldn't want the most beautiful of their daughters to be taken far away to a place with powerful men who are used to getting whatever they want and have to serve them.

Verse 14, **"He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants."**

Says he will take your best fields.

The king will steal your land.

He will take it all for himself and what he doesn't want for himself, he will give to his servants.

The king's favorite people will get the best things.

Nepotism will run rampant in the land.

Verse 15, **"He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants."**

And he will take more.

Do you wanna just be satisfied with the best of your fields? He will then take more of your grain.

There will be a tithe that does not go to God, but to the king.

To take your harvest and take your wine.

To give to your bosses and the kings, servant, and friends.

Verse 16, **"He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work."**

And he will take your servants in your employees. He will take your favorite person in your best worker..

He will take the best of your donkeys and your cattle.
And they will no longer work for you. They will work for him.

Verse 17, **"He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves."**

So you also take a 10th and a tithe of all of your flocks and all of your cattle.

In reality you will become his slaves.

You are giving up your freedom.

This is what a human king is like.

What we see is that God has been very clear.

He is forcing them to sit down at the table and to look into see what will a king do.

What will a king actually be like.

In the reality is, it will be expensive.

It will be costly.

It is going to affect their day-to-day life.

There will be more opportunities for injustice there will be less freedom and more tyranny.

Samuel hasn't said anything yet, but if this king will be righteous or unrighteous.

This is part of the best case scenario.

That's what the righteous king has the right to do now imagine what the unrighteous will do.

How much more will he take?

How many more sons and daughters will he draft?

And how will he treat them when he has them?

Now we need to understand as we look at this passage.

Is that this is really not ultimately about the best form of government.

The Bible has things to say about government.

But the primary problem here is not that monarchy is a deficient form of government. It is that their spirituality is deficient.

God is always planning for Israel to have a king.

You can go back to the mosaic law and see there were rules and stipulations, and God is planning to crown one.

Jesus is the king who is coming he's going to play that seed one day, but it's not time yet.

This is just my opinion. I think Israel is impatient and their a generation too early.

I think they have been willing, David would've been the first king.

But instead because of their refusal to trust God, they're gonna get Saul.

We need to see is that the things we think will save us enslave us.

Sin promises you freedom and wraps you in chains.

Alcohol promises to take your pain away, but it just creates more.

Sexuality promises to satisfy you, but it will leave you empty and broken.

Your rage and revenge promises to feel good in to fix it, but it just will leave you in a wreck.

And God over and over in his word, warns us like he's warning the people here.

God warns us that if we walk in the pack of it leads to death.

That does not say to pick up a cross and deny ourselves to practice, self-control and love and gentleness and patience and kindness because it's sweet.

Because God's impressive and doesn't want you to experience good things.

God tells us this because sin wants to enslave you.

He wants to make you slave and go on the prophets stand and warn here be dragons.

Abandon, hope you enter here.

Don't go this way.

Verse 18, **"And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."**

God warns us that the day will come we will realize we are in slaves. We will realize we are in change. We will realize their son has destroyed our lives in our family and everything around us.

And God says I won't fix it.

This is a warning.

So now God say there's not grace there's no mercy that there's not forgiveness.

This is God saying there's no take backs.

After this day, Israel is going to have kings until they cease to exist as a nation.

And the majority of those kings will be bad ones.

But got it no point says we're doing away with Kings.

What does this means for us that yes there is mercy and yes, there is grace but God does not remove the consequences of our sin.

God will not give you a Time Machine to go back before you made that decision so that you don't have to face other people.

You will have to deal with the way you wounded your friend.

You will have to deal with the craving and the pull from that addiction.

The consequences of our sin may remain.

And this is part of God's warning.

Because some things cannot be changed.

III. God doesn't reject us when we reject him (v. 19-22).

Oh, that we would heed the warning.

Oh that we would listen to the prophets and we would listen to God.

The right response should be good point Samuel what should we do instead?

They should ask and see who knows what God would say.

Verse 19, **"But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, 'No! But there shall be a king over us,'"**

But the people refuse to listen.

You can hear the tone deafness.

It's like they don't care at all and say no we want a king.

Verse 20, **"that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."**

I think if their reasons and they're justifications.

They wanna be like other people.

They're like children saying, "but Mom everybody else does this."

And the main thing they want the king to go out before them in a fight.

It is really hard all these times they keep having to come to the Lord and faith and ask him to save them.

It sure would be a lot more convenient if they just had a king and a standing army, they could take care of this.

Then they don't have to go through all this fasting and fear.

They've got a real solution.

They can justify all they want, but they are still rejecting what God says.

They believe it is worth the cost.

What they want is worth the sin it takes to get it.

We do this too.

We read the warnings and scripture.

We know we should not go that way we know we should not yet we look at what we want and we say I'm gonna do it anyway.

We make the calculation in our head that disobedience to the savior is worth what our sin promises.

Even if deep down, we know it's a bad decision.

Verse 21, **"And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord."**

And so Samuel hears them, and he repeats them to the Lord.

He tells him God they've decided I tried to warn them. They do not want you. They want a king.

Verse 22, **"And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."**

And God says OK.

We will give them just what they want. Tell them to go home and wait.

You will see in the chapters ahead how God answers them.

And how disappointing the king's gonna be.

This is a bit of a heavy passage.

The Bible is wonderful and it's rich, but not everything in it is sunshine and rainbows.

Not everything in it fits a beautiful Instagram aesthetic.

Not all of it is perfect for making a short TikTok.

Some of it is just hard and nuanced.

Some of it's uncomfortable in some of it we just have to sit in it.

And we had to sit in the heaviness and resist the urge to relieve it or to run to our favorite happy verse.

So I'm not gonna apologize for this passage.

I'm not gonna try to cover it up or say actually means something different.

But I do want to do is remind you that even this passage here points to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You may ask how?

This passage is the story of God's people rejecting God.

And I'm asking to be in charge of their own lives.

It is God telling them exactly why an explicit detail that is going to go horribly and they will 100% regret it.

And the people say, "naw we're good I'm gonna do it."

The gospel and what comes next.

Everything God says comes true.

Saul is going to be an unbelievably disappointing king.

David, even though he is much better and has higher highs will ultimately also fail over and over and over in ways that devastate the nation.

And the gospel is, how does God respond to his people?

How does he respond when he tells his people not to do something they say they're gonna do it anyway, and then it goes horribly and they come and complain to God?

God responds with grace.

God responds by preparing the king of kings Jesus Christ.

Any of us if this happened would tell our friend I told you so.

Or if we don't say, I told you so right away, we'll tell our spouse or we'll tell other people later.

We will kick back feeling high and mighty and feel self-righteousness

"I told him this was a terrible idea and look I was right."

That is not what God does.

When you go to God, after having ruined your life and done all the things, God told you not to do and other Christians told you not to do.

God does not say I told you so.

God does not reject us.

God does not tell us it is too late.

Think of the prodigal son.

Who told his daddy he wished he was dead so we could have some money.

And when it went just like his dad knew that it would and he came back having lost everything smelling like pigs covered in mud.

His father ran to him to welcome him back as his son.

That is what Jesus does with us.

He does not give us a speech. He does not give us what we deserve. He runs to welcome us home.

Our God is so gracious.

We need to feel the heaviness of how awful sin is and how foolish it is to get in and how desperately God wants us to avoid it not just so that we

can attempt to flee from it, but so that we can recognize how wonderful his grace is.

Even when we run as far away as possible, God, sends Jesus.

Jesus Christ came down to earth to save the people who rejected him.

And even when the leaders of Israel said he's not our king kill him

As he died, He said forgive them.

Jesus' grace for you is greater than you can imagine.

What should we do?

First, we should not try to be the king.

We shouldn't look to other kings, but to Jesus.

But what I want you to know and what I want you to remember.

When you look at the ruin that sin has created when you find yourself in bondage and enslaved and you are humiliated and you are filled with shame and all you can think about is all the people who told you so how much you need you shouldn't have done this and yet you did it anyway and you can't believe you're here again for the millionth time.

Remember, Jesus died for you.

Remember the goodness of the gospel is that even there in that place there's grace.

There is mercy.

There is forgiveness for all your sins, including the dumbest ones that we all knew you were foolish to do.

And come to Jesus.

Know that you can come to him, and he will not shame you he will not condemn you as long as you come.

He may not save you from the consequences on this side of life.

He will save you from the eternal ones.

And he will stand before you that when any dare accuse you of look at this person and look at they've done and let me read the rap sheet. Jesus will say I object this is my son. This is my daughter with whom I am well please not because of their behavior, but because they are mine and I love them.

Why would we ever want another king?